WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   An automatic authentication method in a print
process that requires user authentication, comprising
the steps of:

5   extracting information related to an application
and/or a document for the print process as attribute
information; and

            executing user authentication based on the
attribute information.

10   2.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the
attribute information contains various kinds of
document attribute information including at least one
of a document name, application name, document
creator/updater, affiliation of the document

15   creator/updater, password, create/update date, which
are associated with a document print process.

3.   The method according to claim 1, further
comprising the step of executing, when user
authentication has succeeded and a print process is

20   executed, an accounting process of expendables
associated with the document print process for each
user or each department of a group to which the user
belongs.

4.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the

25   attribute information contains various kinds of
application attribute information including at least
one of an application name, application user,

affiliation of the application user, password, use date, which are associated with the application used.

5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of executing, when user authentication has succeeded and a print process is executed, an accounting process associated with use of the application for each user or each department of a group to which the user belongs.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein user authentication is executed by comparing an ID and password found based on the attribute information, and an ID and password that a user inputs to a printer.

7. An automatic authentication system in a print process that requires user authentication, comprising:

means of extracting information related to an application and/or a document for the print process as attribute information; and

means of executing user authentication based on the attribute information.

8. The system according to claim 7, wherein the attribute information contains various kinds of document attribute information including at least one of a document name, application name, document creator/updater, affiliation of the document creator/updater, password, create/update date, which are associated with a document print process.

9.   The system according to claim 7, wherein said automatic authentication system comprises a client computer or print server which is installed with a printer driver, a server for managing a network, and a printer for executing the print process, which are connected via a network, and

said extraction means is included in the printer driver, and said user authentication means is included in the server.

10.   The system according to claim 7, further comprising means of, when user authentication has succeeded and a print process is executed, executing an accounting process of expendables associated with the document print process for each user or each department of a group to which the user belongs.

11.   The system according to claim 7, wherein the attribute information contains various kinds of application attribute information including at least one of an application name, application user, affiliation of the application user, password, use date, which are associated with the application used.

12.   The system according to claim 7, further comprising means of, when user authentication has succeeded and a print process is executed, executing an accounting process associated with use of the application for each user or each department of a group to which the user belongs.

13. The system according to claim 7, wherein said automatic authentication system comprises a client computer or print server which is installed with a printer driver, and a printer for executing the print process, which are connected via a network, and

said extraction means is included in the printer driver, and said user authentication means is included in the printer.

14. The system according to claim 7, wherein said user authentication means compares an ID and password found based on the attribute information, and an ID and password that a user inputs to a printer.

15. A printer driver in an automatic authentication system which executes a print process that requires user authentication, comprising:

means of receiving information related to an application and/or a document for the print process as attribute information;

means of extracting information required for user authentication from the attribute information;

means of sending a user authentication request appended with the extracted information to a server via a network; and

means of, when user authentication has succeeded, controlling a printer to execute the print process.

16. A printer driver in an automatic authentication system which executes a print process that requires user authentication, comprising:

means of receiving information related to an application and/or a document for the print process as attribute information;

means of extracting information required for user authentication from the attribute information; and

means of sending print information appended with the extracted information to a printer.

17. A server in an automatic authentication system which executes a print process that requires user authentication, comprising:

means of receiving information, which is required for user authentication and is extracted from attribute information related to an application and/or a document for the print process, from a printer driver via a network;

means of checking a user authentication result by comparing the extracted information with user authentication information which is registered in advance; and

means of returning the user authentication result to the printer driver via the network.

18. The server according to claim 17, wherein the user authentication information which is registered in

advance contains related information of a user and a department of a group to which the user belongs, and

said server further comprises means of, when user authentication has succeeded and a print process is executed, executing an accounting process of expendables associated with the document print process for each user or each department of the group to which the user belongs.

19. The server according to claim 17, wherein the user authentication information which is registered in advance contains related information of a user and a department of a group to which the user belongs, and

said server further comprises means of, when user authentication has succeeded and a print process is executed, executing an accounting process associated with use of the application for each user or each department of the group to which the user belongs.

20. The server according to claim 17, further comprising:

means of registering and holding various kinds of attribute information of departments, affiliations, individuals, print accounting states, associated with clients, users, and groups who make a document print process; and

means of updating use states of a printer used in a print process for respective departments, affiliations, and individuals.

21.   The server according to claim 20, wherein the attribute information contains various kinds of document attribute information including at least one of a document name, application name, document creator/updater, affiliation of the document creator/updater, password, create/update date, which are sent from a print server or client and are associated with a document print process, and

said checking means comprises means of executing department authentication of a user, group, affiliation, or the like by comparing a document creator/updater, affiliation of the document creator/updater, and password registered in said server on the basis of the various kinds of document attribute information.

22.   The server according to claim 17, wherein the attribute information contains various kinds of application attribute information including at least one of an application name, application user, affiliation of the application user, password, use date, which are associated with the application used, and

said checking means comprises means of granting permission of use of the application on the basis of the application attribute information.

23.   A printer in an automatic authentication system which executes a print process that requires user authentication, comprising:

means of receiving information, which is required
for user authentication and is extracted from attribute
information related to an application and/or a document
for the print process, from a printer driver together

5   with print information;

means of inputting user authentication
information; and

means of executing user authentication on the
basis of a comparison result of the information

10   required for user authentication and the input
information.

24.   A storage medium which computer-readably stores a
printer driver in an automatic authentication system
which executes a print process that requires user

15   authentication,

said printer driver comprising the steps of:

receiving information related to an application
and/or a document for the print process as attribute
information;

20   extracting information required for user
authentication from the attribute information;

sending a user authentication request appended
with the extracted information to a server via a
network; and

25   controlling, when user authentication has
succeeded, a printer to execute the print process.

25.   A storage medium which computer-readably stores a
printer driver in an automatic authentication system
which executes a print process that requires user
authentication,

5   said printer driver comprising the steps of:

          receiving information related to an application
and/or a document for the print process as attribute
information;

          extracting information required for user

10   authentication from the attribute information; and

          sending print information appended with the
extracted information to a printer.

26.   A storage medium which computer-readably stores a
control program for controlling a printer in an

15   automatic authentication system which executes a print
process that requires user authentication,

          said control program comprising the steps of:

          receiving information, which is required for user
authentication and is extracted from attribute

20   information related to an application and/or a document
for the print process, from a printer driver together
with print information;

          inputting user authentication information; and

          executing user authentication on the basis of a

25   comparison result of the information required for user
authentication and the input information.

27.   An information processing apparatus connecting
with an external information processing apparatus
performing a user authentication for a print process,
comprising:

5   extracting means of extracting information
related to an application and/or a document for the
pint process as attribute information; and

        output means of outputting the attribute
information extracted by said extracting means to said
10   external information processing apparatus using the
attribute information for a user authentication for the
print process.

28.   The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said
attribute information contains various kind of document
15   attribute information including at least one of a
document name, document creator, application of the
document creator, create date which are associated with
a document print process.

29.   The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said
20   attribute information contains an application name
indicating an application to be used.

30.   The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said
extracting means extracts the attribute information by
calling a printer driver module and API provided
25   between OS and the printer driver module and causing OS
to operate a document in said apparatus.

31. The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said API is provided in the printer driver module.

32. The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said extracting means calls said API in response to a print
5 instructor inputted from the application.